

CO-OPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 1.1** Co-option of a Town Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the council due to the following:
- When a seat has been left vacant because no eligible candidate stood for election at the full elections for a new council
 - When a seat has fallen vacant (because of resignation, death or ineligibility)
- 1.2** On receipt of written notification from the Electoral Officer at Allerdale Borough Council the following procedure will be undertaken by the Town Clerk
- a) Announce the vacancy to be filled by co-option within 21 days of receipt of the written notification by means of displaying a notice on the Council Notice Board, website and the Town Council social media page. A copy will also be sent to the local press.
 - b) The Co-option notice will include the closing date of requests for consideration (4 weeks)
 - c) Inform the council that the Co-option policy has been instigated.
- 1.3** Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying applicant(s)
- 1.4** Applicants are recommended to read the publication “The Good Councillor Guide” and approach the Town Clerk with any questions they may have.
- 1.5** Applicants for co-option will be asked to:
- a) Submit a letter (or email) explaining why they are interested in applying and what they think they can bring to the role of Town Councillor.
 - b) Confirm their eligibility by completing the application form (appendix 1)
- 1.6** Applicants will be invited to attend a Full Council Meeting at which their application will be considered. They will be given the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes to introduce themselves and explain why they want to join the council.
- 1.7** Members will be given the opportunity to ask questions.
- 1.8** Members of the press and public shall be asked to leave the meeting should councillors wish to discuss the applications
- 1.9** After due consideration, the Chair will re-convene the meeting. Voting will take place by a show of hands, or if at least 2 members so request, by a signed ballot.
- 1.10** In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
- 1.11** The Chair will then declare if the candidate is successful and if so is co-opted.

- 1.12** If the council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply.
- 1.13** At the earliest opportunity the applicant will be invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which completes the process of joining the council.
- 1.14** Within 28 days of co-option, applicants are required to complete a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be provided by the Town Clerk. **APPENDIX 1**

WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL

CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

1. Eligibility Criteria

Under Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972, a person is qualified to be co-opted as a parish councillor, if he/she is a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or a relevant citizen of the European Union, and on the 'relevant date' (i.e. the day on which he/she is co-opted) has reached 18 years of age and:

- is registered as a local government elector for the parish; or
- has during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, any land or other premises in the parish; or
- his/her principal or only place of work during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of co-option has been in the parish; or
- has during the whole of twelve months preceding the date of co-option resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it.

Please circle which of the above applies to you.

2. Disqualification Criteria

Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, a person is disqualified from being elected as a parish councillor or being a member of a parish council if he/she:

- a) holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the council is represented; or
- b) is a person who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, or a debt relief restrictions order or interim debt relief restrictions order under Schedule 4ZB of the Insolvency Act 1986¹; or
- c) has within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine; or
- d) is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.
- e) I (*PRINT name*) hereby confirm, that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Wigton Town Councillor, and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed:

Date:

¹A person who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, or a debt relief restrictions order or interim debt relief order becomes disqualified from the date of the judgement or execution.